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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АМНИСТИЯ
منظمة العفو الدولية
國際特赦組織

URGENT ACTION

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EXTRA 51/99 **Fear of massive human rights violations by paramilitary forces** **16 April 1999**

EAST TIMOR **Human rights defenders, journalists, pro-independence civil servants**

Paramilitary groups that support continued integration of East Timor with Indonesia are massing in the East Timorese capital, Dili in preparation for a show of force scheduled for 17 April 1999. This is raising serious concerns for the safety of supporters of independence, human rights defenders and journalists.

According to press reports 12 trucks carrying paramilitaries have already arrived in Dili. Several members of the National Council of East Timorese Resistance (CNRT) - the political wing of the pro-independence groups - have already been detained by paramilitary groups and Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI).

In the past week, paramilitary groups have threatened supporters of independence, human rights defenders and journalists with death or arrest. A signed statement issued by one paramilitary group, *Aitarak* (Thorn), on 13 April, warned any pro-independence civil servants to resign and to return any government property they have the use of, such as cars and houses. A paramilitary operation to seek them out is scheduled to begin on 17 April.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 18 and possibly many more East Timorese have been unlawfully killed by pro-Indonesian paramilitary groups and ABRI in East Timor since 5 April. Others have been arbitrarily detained and ill-treated in custody. In actions supported by ABRI, paramilitaries have stepped up their attacks on those in favour of independence and have threatened, and in some cases attacked, human rights monitors, journalists and humanitarian workers. In addition to the killing of civilians by paramilitaries and ABRI others have been arbitrarily detained and ill-treated in custody. In some cases where ABRI has been present during human rights violations they have either actively participated in killings and attacks or not intervened to prevent such attacks. ABRI is known to have supplied some paramilitary groups with weapons.

There have been repeated calls from human rights groups, including Amnesty International, and members of the international community for the Indonesian Government to control the paramilitaries. The United States and Australian Governments and the European Union (EU) are among those which have called on the Indonesian Government to disarm the paramilitary groups. So far these calls have been ignored.

The next three months are a critical time for East Timor's political future. On 21 and 22 April the Indonesian and Portugese Governments will meet to agree on an autonomy package which is scheduled for a vote by the East Timorese in a ballot in July 1999. All the indications suggest however, that the upsurge in paramilitary activity is deliberately aimed at destabilising conditions in East Timor, undermining the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the East Timor problem. Urgent measures are needed to check the cycle of violence in order to bring about the conditions which are necessary to ensure the July ballot can take place in a free and open atmosphere.

Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom

Tel: (44)(171) 413 5500 Fax: 956 1157 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502 E-mail: uateam@amnesty.org

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or Indonesian or your own language:
- expressing serious concern about the build up paramilitaries in Dili and the threats they have made to pro-independence supporters, human rights defenders and journalists;
- asking the authorities to take immediate measures to prevent paramilitary groups from committing human rights violations, in accordance with international standards;
- asking the authorities to respond to calls by the international community to disarm paramilitary groups;
- asking them to agree to a UN human rights monitoring presence in East Timor.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Defence and Security
Gen. Wiranto
Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan
Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No.13-14
Jakarta 10110
Indonesia
Fax: **+ 62 21 381 4535/ 384 5178**
Salutation: **Dear Minister**

President Jusuf Habibie
Presiden RI
Istana Negara
Jl. Veteran
Jakarta Pusat
Indonesia
Fax: **+ 62 21 526 8726 / 380 5511 / 345 7782**
Telex: **44283 BIGRA IA; 44469 DEPLU IA**
Telegram: **President Habibie, Jakarta, Indonesia**

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 May 1999.